Fauquier
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PUBLIC
Library

Free Web-Based E-Mail Services

- http://mail.aol.com (easy to use, quickest to set up, lots of ads)
- http://mail.google.com (more storage, text ads, for techies)
- http://mail.yahoo.com (easy to use, ads)
- Your ISP (Comcast, Hughes, etc.) – log in from any PC

Tips on Using E-Mail

Using e-mail involves unwritten rules and language styles (called "netiquette") that new users might not know. The following hints explain how to write, send, and receive e-mail, and protect your Web-based e-mail account.

Be concise
E-mail is meant to be quick, and thus it is often more casual than a letter or a phone call. Some people receive hundreds of e-mails a day, so keep e-mails short and to the point. But be aware that rushed messages can lead to bad grammar and miscommunication.

Avoid junk mail and spam
Set up a free e-mail account and use the e-mail address for when you do your online shopping, etc. Keep your primary e-mail account for the important stuff (e-mail from friends, library notices, etc.) and use your other e-mail address in cases where you might end up getting unwanted advertisements and the like.

Sign your e-mail
It is not always apparent who sent an e-mail, so it is good practice to sign your e-mail with your name and the library or group you are affiliated with. You may want to include your e-mail address as well, even though your address appears in the e-mail header. Most e-mail programs let you compose a signature that will automatically appear on each message you send.

Do not use all capital letters
Typing in all caps is the online equivalent of SHOUTING. Don't use a string of capital letters in your correspondence unless absolutely necessary.

Do not repeat messages
You never know when someone will receive your e-mail, so sending the same message to the same recipient more than once can be perceived as pestering. It is courteous to give recipients a chance to respond to a previous message before re-sending the original message. Many people send and receive e-mail only at regularly scheduled times of the day and may take their time answering. Some people pick up their e-mail only a few times a week. Be patient.

Use threads
Threads are a series of responses to an original message. When responding to a message, pursue the thread by replying to the latest message instead of starting an entirely new message. Keeping the thread of information together makes it easier for the participants to follow the chain of information that has been exchanged. This is most appreciated when responding to a newsgroup or listserv, which may have multiple discussions occurring simultaneously.

Be wary of attaching files
It is becoming increasingly popular to attach files to e-mails. Many files -- especially images or sound files -- are large and may take a long time to download. Attachments are also a popular conduit for computer viruses, and by carelessly attaching a file, you may unwittingly help a virus to spread. Always scan incoming attachments with a virus protection program and think carefully before sending an attachment to someone else.

Clean your e-mail
Keep the number of messages in your inbox to a minimum by deleting unneeded e-mails and folders frequently. You can also set up unique folders and move messages you want to save to these folders, thus freeing up space in the inbox. This will speed up your e-mail productivity.

Protect your password
Never let anyone find out your password. Do not use common names or numbers for your password such as your dog's name, your birthday, or your telephone number.

Log off or log out
Logging off is especially important when using public computers at the library. If you do not log off, the person who uses the computer after you can use your account to send e-mail, and the recipient will assume that e-mail was sent by you. Also avoid clicking/checking on "always remember me on this computer" when you're using a public computer.